



## Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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### Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

#### List of issues and questions in relation to the combined initial and second to fifth periodic reports of the Central African Republic\*

##### General context

1. In her report of September 2013 on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic ([A/HRC/24/59](#) and Corr.1), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights refers to the collapse of the State since December 2012 owing to a rapid breakdown in law and order resulting from the absence of civilian administration and of defence and police forces across the country. She also indicates that, following the offensive in December 2012 by the Séléka coalition, judicial personnel fled their jurisdictions, after which Séléka soldiers reportedly looted and occupied courts, taking the place of judges and prosecutors in a number of prefectures. In the light of this information, please indicate how the State party plans to build the capacity of law enforcement institutions and authorities at all levels and in all prefectures and what measures have been put in place to enforce the rule of law throughout the territory of the State party in order to ensure that women are protected and enjoy their rights.

2. The High Commissioner recommends the screening and vetting of the Central African armed forces and Séléka members, under international guidance, throughout the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, to exclude perpetrators of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in the national security and defence forces. Please provide information on the implementation of this recommendation, in particular as regards the exclusion of perpetrators of serious violations of the human rights of women.

3. Please provide information on women's participation at the decision-making level in the peace process and in peacebuilding, in conformity with Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women, peace and security. Please also indicate how the State party envisages applying the provisions of the Convention, through, among other things, the integration of gender concerns into peacebuilding projects, consistent with general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

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\* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group for the fifty-eighth session, meeting from 21 to 25 October 2013.



4. The High Commissioner recommends that measures be taken to enhance the participation of women at the decision-making level. Please indicate how the State party is guaranteeing the participation of women in the political and economic reconstruction of the country.

**Violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations**

5. The High Commissioner refers to hundreds of cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by the Séléka, both between December 2012 and March 2013, while a coalition of rebel groups, and from 24 March 2013, having assumed the role of a national defence and security force. Please comment on this information and indicate the measures taken to remedy the situation.

6. The High Commissioner also mentions the prevalence of impunity and the collapse of the judiciary. In the light of this information, please indicate the measures taken and envisaged to put an end to impunity, in particular as regards violence against women perpetrated during the conflict. Please also indicate whether the State party envisages carrying out judicial reform to ensure women's access to justice, including in cases of gender-based violence.

7. Please supply information on measures taken to assist victims of sexual violence during the conflict and to provide them with access to medical treatment, mental health care and psychosocial support.

8. The High Commissioner indicates that, as at June 2013, there were 206,000 internally displaced persons living in extremely precarious conditions in the State party. Please indicate the measures in place to support internally displaced women, including to protect them from violence and to ensure that they have access to basic health care, education, clean water and sanitation.

**Violence against women**

9. The Committee has been informed of the extremely high prevalence of violence against women, including rape, in the State party, even in areas not affected by the conflict. Please provide information on measures envisaged to remedy this situation.

10. The High Commissioner recommends that the State party adopt legal reforms to combat sexual and gender-based violence by introducing new criminal offences and increased penalties, and expand the scope of protection of and support for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Please provide information on the steps taken to implement this recommendation and indicate whether the State party envisages adopting a comprehensive strategy and a comprehensive law to combat violence against women.

11. Please provide information on the measures envisaged to eliminate the stigmatization faced by victims of rape, given that such stigmatization results in economic, social and familial exclusion, repudiation by spouses and exclusion from school, and to address victims' lack of access to health-care services, including psychological support.

12. Please provide information on the measures taken by the State party to tackle violence against women and girls perceived as witches. Please indicate whether the State party envisages criminalizing acts of violence, including what is known as

“popular justice”, against women perceived as witches and carrying out awareness-raising campaigns to put an end to such violence.

### **Harmful practices**

13. It is indicated in the State party’s report<sup>1</sup> that a national plan of action against practices harmful to women’s health and gender-based violence has been drawn up with the support of the World Health Organization (para. 132). Please provide information on the practices covered by the plan, the strategies to combat them, the status of implementation of those strategies and their relevance to the post-conflict situation.

### **Education**

14. It is indicated in the State party’s report that no more than 1.45 per cent of gross domestic product is allocated to public expenditure on education (para. 305). It is further stated that the capacity of the education system in the State party has stagnated for more than 10 years (para. 70). In addition, the High Commissioner indicates that schools across the country were systematically looted or occupied for military purposes during the offensive, meaning that only a few private schools remain open and public schools remain closed. Please indicate the percentage of the State resources that the State party envisages allocating to education and the plans anticipated to restore access to public education, at the very minimum, for the primary cycle.

### **Health**

15. The High Commissioner indicates that, as with schools, hospitals were systematically looted or occupied for military purposes during the offensive. She further indicates that this has seriously affected access to health, with particularly grave consequences for children and pregnant women, especially with the destruction of the maternity hospital in Bangui. Please indicate the percentage of the State resources that the State party envisages allocating to health services and the plans anticipated to restore access to public health facilities, especially in relation to sexual and reproductive health services, given the extremely high maternal mortality rate.

### **Disadvantaged groups of women**

16. Please provide information on the situation of women currently held in detention facilities, especially as a result of the conflict, in addition to the proportion of women detainees charged with witchcraft. Furthermore, please provide information on the extent to which detention centres for women meet the basic international requirements set out in the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders.

17. Please indicate the legal and other measures taken or envisaged by the State party to end the practice of enslaving Pygmies and to protect Pygmy women and girls from such practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the combined initial and second to fifth periodic reports of the State party (CEDAW/C/CAF/1-5).

**Marriage and family relations**

18. Please provide information on measures adopted to eradicate the practice of child marriage and indicate whether the State party is considering abolishing polygamy.

**Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention**

19. Please indicate any progress made with regard to ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and acceptance of the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention.

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